

NSC BRIEFING

2 February 1955

MENDES-FRANCE'S SURVIVAL ODDS

- I. Mendes-France's parliamentary position grows increasingly precarious:
 - A. Next hurdle--probable confidence vote during Assembly debate on N. Africa.
 - B. Debate started Wed 2 Feb: confidence vote may come by Sat 5 Feb.
- II. Nevertheless, odds probably shade better than 50-50 Mendes favor:
 - A. Although key Radical Socialist faction (Rene Mayer) opposed to Mendes- nonetheless believed unwilling endanger Atlantic alliance. Mayer wants see Paris Accords safely through Council.
 - B. Embassy Paris speculates that Mendes fall would not necessarily jeopardize chances of favorable Council action on Accords.
 - C. Might mean further delay, however. In event "cabinet crisis" of week or more, constitutional deadline for Council action on Accords (now 11 Mar 55) could legally be pushed back by same length of time it takes to form new government.
- III. Meanwhile, schedule of action on Accords remains much as before:

- A. French Council expected to start debate between 10 and 15 Feb, following its go-round on N. Africa (starts 8 Feb).
Vote on Accords expected within five days.
- B. In German Bundestag, second and third readings scheduled for 24 Feb (with vote by 26 Feb). Bundesrat action not expected until mid-March.